

During public hearings, the Commission heard testimony regarding the increasing number of English language learner pupils at many districts in the state, and the cost of providing an appropriate education to such pupils.

Under current law, bilingual-bicultural aid is provided to school districts that are required by state law to provide special classes to pupils of limited-English proficiency (LEP). These classes are required at schools that enroll 10 or more LEP pupils in a language group in grades K-3, or 20 or more in grades 4-8 or 9-12. Aidable costs under the program are defined as the districts' prior year costs for salaries, special books, equipment and other expenses approved by DPI that are attributable only to programs for LEP pupils. In 2016-17, 52 school districts received aid under the program. An additional 305 school districts reported at least one LEP pupil, but did not meet the threshold for aid in that year.

The table below shows the number of bilingual pupils, the amount of aid appropriated for bilingual-bicultural aid, and the proration rate for the program in each year from 2000-01 to 2018-19.

TABLE 2
Categorical Aid Funding for Bilingual Pupils
2000-01 to 2018-19

	<u>Pupils</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Proration</u>
2000-01	29,016	\$8,291,400	19.3%
2001-02	32,394	8,291,400	18.0
2002-03	34,199	8,291,400	17.2
2003-04	35,768	8,291,400	13.8
2004-05	39,255	8,291,400	11.4
2005-06	38,941	9,073,800	11.5
2006-07	43,442	9,890,400	11.6
2007-08	47,456	9,890,400	11.3
2008-09	47,858	9,890,400	10.8
2009-10	49,286	9,544,200	9.7
2010-11	49,543	9,544,200	9.4
2011-12	49,905	8,589,800	8.0
2012-13	48,188	8,589,800	8.3
2013-14	47,417	8,589,800	7.4
2014-15	46,954	8,589,800	8.8
2015-16	46,851	8,589,800	8.8
2016-17	47,567	8,589,800	8.6
2017-18	50,848	8,589,800	8.1
2018-19	N.A.	8,589,800	N.A.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Recommend increasing funding for the bilingual-bicultural aid program by \$7.3 million GPR in 2019-20, so that the proration rate will equal an estimated 15%, and by \$17.9 million GPR in 2020-21 and future years, so that the proration rate will equal an estimated 25%.

ALT 1	2019-20	2020-21
GPR	\$7,300,000	\$17,900,000

2. Recommend creating a new bilingual-bicultural supplemental aid program that would provide a payment of \$100 per English language learner pupil. The program would cost an estimated \$5.1 million GPR annually.

ALT 2	2019-20	2020-21
GPR	\$5,100,000	\$5,100,000

3. Recommend providing additional funding by weighting English language learner pupils. Recommend one or both of the following:

a. Weight ELL pupils as 1.2 FTE in the general school aids and revenue limit formulas. Under the three-year rolling average pupil enrollment used under revenue limits, this approach would increase revenue limit authority for school districts by an estimated \$34 million in the first year, \$68 million in the second year, and by \$102 million annually thereafter. (According to a January, 2015, report by the Education Commission of the States, 25 states used a weighting factor to fund aid to bilingual-bicultural pupils; of those, the average weight was equal to approximately 1.2.)

b. Provide \$15,000 GPR in 2019-20 to hire a consultant to recommend adjustments to the weighting factor. Create an appropriation for the funds, and specify that they could be released by the two standing committees of the Legislature dealing with education to an organization of their choice to cover travel and other costs for providing consulting services relating to setting the appropriation weighting factors.

ALT 3b	2019-20	2020-21
GPR	\$15,000	\$0

Recommend modifying the eligibility requirements for the bilingual-bicultural program, so that a district would qualify for aid for schools in which five or more LEP pupils are enrolled in grades K-3, or ten or more LEP pupils are enrolled in grades 4-8 or 9-12. Under this approach, more districts could qualify for aid under the program, but the reimbursement rate would decrease unless additional funding was also added.